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ABSTRACT

Examining high school language arts experiences, a study surveyed 2,687 randomly selected students from 18 colleges in 14 Midwestern states who had taken the American College Testing (ACT) tests in high school. Responses were received from 558 students (a 21% response rate), with a high ratio of generally academically superior and non-minority female students. Respondents answered a 29-item survey concerning 29 essential competencies considered crucial to the language arts programs in secondary schools (including the ability to organize writing for a specific purpose, and the ability to edit the writing of others). For each of the competencies, students were asked to rate their experiences in the three areas that applied to their high school language arts classes--standard (required) English, journalism courses, and other English electives (speech, drama, creative writing, etc.). Students also responded to an open-ended question asking for suggestions for high school language arts teachers. Results revealed that, when compared to students with no high school journalism experience, students who took at least one journalism course rated it as fulfilling the general language arts competencies better in 16 of the 29 competencies. When the competencies were collapsed into six categories, students rated journalism courses superior in four of them: writing, editing, gathering/use of sources, and affective domain. On the open-ended question, among the most-mentioned of college students' suggestions for high school language arts teachers were to: (1) teach basic writing skills; (2) develop and encourage various writing styles; and (3) assign more writing. (Four tables of data are included, and a survey cover letter, sample survey, and 20 footnotes are appended.) (MM)

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COLLEGE STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM AND OTHER LANGUAGE ARTS EXPERIENCES

by

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A paper submitted for presentation at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Secondary Education Division
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ABSTRACT

"College Student Attitudes Toward High School Journalism and Other Language Arts Experiences"

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Students from 18 colleges in 14 Midwestern states who had taken ACT tests in high school responded to a 29-item survey about their high school language arts experiences. In 16 of the 29 competencies, 558 respondents rated high school journalism courses No. 1, and they selected journalism courses as having fulfilled the general language arts competencies better than either standard (required) English (English I, English II . . .) or other English electives (drama, speech, creative writing . . .). When the 29 competencies were collapsed into six logical categories, students rated journalism courses superior in four of them: Writing, Editing, Gathering/Use of Sources and Affective Domain. On an open-response question, journalism courses were mentioned on 15 of 269 surveys, and all of those statements were interpreted as positive. Among the most-mentioned of college students' suggestions for high school language arts teachers were to 1. teach basic writing skills; 2. develop and encourage various writing styles; and 3. assign much writing.

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COLLEGE STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM AND OTHER LANGUAGE ARTS EXPERIENCES

Perceptions, attitudes or feelings about an academic subject area are thought to influence performance, continued study and possible career choices in that area. In the present study, college students were asked to think back to their high school language arts experiences and to rate Standard English courses, Journalism Courses and Other Elective classes in 29 competencies. They were also asked to make recommendations to high school language arts teachers in an open-ended response item.

Also, in light of numerous assumptions as to the superiority of high school English composition and literature classes compared with journalism or other English electives made by college admissions officers, high school English chairpersons, faculty members and others, the current study attempts to allow students themselves to rate the relative merits of each of those areas by rating how well the competencies fulfilled general language arts objectives.

Thus, some research questions guiding this project include:

- How do college students rate their high school experiences in Standard (required) English, Journalism Courses and Other Electives (speech, drama, creative writing, and the like)?
- How do students who have taken a credit course in high school journalism rate that experience compared with other language arts experiences?
- How do college students rate the three major language arts areas when the 29 competencies are collapsed into six general topical subgroups: writing, editing, gathering information/use of sources, critical thinking, language use and affective domain?

• How do journalism classes per se compare with newspaper or yearbook experiences that carry credit but that do not include a formal course?

• How does the taking of a high school journalism course relate with other variables such as taking college-level journalism, majoring in a communication area and other indices of academic success in both high school and college?

• Aside from the formalized survey questions, what do college students suggest for teachers of high school language arts courses that would benefit future college students?

Several other studies suggest the worth of high school publications and journalism classroom experience, but none available have examined student attitudes comparing journalism with required or elective English.

For example, Koziol found that 70% of the high school students surveyed in 1981 aspired to a communication-related profession because they could use the writing, speaking and creative abilities that were learned in a high school journalism experience.[1] And a 1986 study of a selected group of college students in their first journalism reporting course showed that of all co-curricular activities offered at their high schools, newspaper and yearbook staff experience ranked first out of seven in preparing them for the rigors of college. The other items ranked below journalism were 2.) speech/drama/debate and student senate/class officer (tie), 3.) academic-related clubs, 4.) athletics, 5.) music-related activities, and 6.) non-academic clubs.[2]

Much other firsthand testimony from both high school students and teachers supports the academic worth of high school journalism as a class and the benefits of participation on a school publication.[3]

Adding to much of this anecdotal evidence, a systematic study of the role of

journalism in secondary education by commissioners in the Journalism Education Association in 1987 found through hearings held throughout the country that journalism, perhaps more consistently than other language arts offerings, tends to blend the liberal arts, makes students responsible for what they write, helps them learn research skills and underscores the value of grammar, spelling, usage and style.[4]

In the same JEA study, a survey sent to former students of 20 outstanding high school journalism programs in the nation found that secondary school participation in journalism had been "significant in almost every area of their academic and personal development."[5] Among the 200 surveys returned, some typical responses to an open-ended question praised high school journalism because it helped students compose and edit at the typewriter; produced visible effects resulting in reader feedback; raised self-confidence; improved interpersonal relationships; increased writing speed and precision; gave a sense of maturity; provided the opportunity to evaluate personal writing and reporting truthfully; helped learn to accept and practice responsibility; developed leadership skills; and provided a learning situation in which to analyze international, national and local issues and in so doing helped them become more accepting of ideas and opinions contrary to their own.[6]

In a recent national study, Weaver and Wilhoit analyzed open-ended responses of 1,001 professional journalists to determine their motivations for entering the communication field. Answers were classified into 51 areas -- 10 people-related and 41 circumstance-related. A grade school or high school teacher/adviser was first choice among the 10 people-related reasons, and work on a junior or senior high school newspaper was the third highest response of the 41

circumstance-related reasons for becoming a professional journalist.[7] It should be noted that no specific subject-area teacher/adviser is listed in the people-related reason; however, in light of much other information presented here and available elsewhere, one might presume that a substantial percentage of these influential teachers/advisers were in journalism.

Similarly, a study by Forrester of the American Society of Newspaper Editors Committee on Education found that nearly 70% of the respondents claimed to have been influenced in a media career choice by a high school journalism experience.[8] In a more general way, a study of television journalists found that encouragement from elementary and high school teachers was primary motivation for selecting that career.[9]

Method

A subcommittee of educators on the JEA Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education helped construct a survey containing essential competencies considered crucial to the language arts programs in the nation's secondary schools.[10] It was further evaluated and refined by language arts test specialists at the American College Testing Program of Iowa City, Iowa. The 29 items that were selected for the survey were based on generally accepted language arts competencies found in various national and state commissions examining curriculum reform.[11]

Along with demographic data on the survey itself, records of students' ACT Assessment scores and Student Profile Section data were added later for analysis. An open-ended question was also posed and is included after discussion of the competency analysis.

For each of the 29 competencies, students were asked to rate their

experiences in any of the three areas that applied to their high school language arts classes: Standard (required) English, Journalism Courses, and Other Electives. Each was rated on a three-point scale with "3" being "helped a lot, "2" being "helped a little" and "1" being "did not help."

So that respondents would not detect that journalism was a primary variable in the study at hand and so as to make comparisons among all language arts credit courses, the survey was general in nature. (See Appendix) A cover letter from an ACT research specialist[12] accompanied the "High School Language Arts Experiences Survey." It was believed that if respondents were influenced by a journalism bias within the survey, a large percentage would address journalistic issues in their open-ended responses at the end of the survey.[13] Because only 15 of 269 students (5.58%) mentioned their journalism experiences in the open-ended part of the instrument, the researcher was satisfied that respondents answered the survey about language arts experiences in general even though 143 of 558 total respondents (25.63%) took a journalism class, 125 (22.40%) received credit for newspaper lab and 159 (28.49%) received credit for yearbook lab. However, in most of the comparisons between Standard English courses and Other Electives, non-journalism students outnumber those with a journalism course experience by about a 4:1 ratio because several students who took a journalism class also took newspaper or yearbook for credit as well.

As will be seen in the analysis of the open-ended responses following analysis of the survey part of the instrument, most student comments referred to required English classes or language arts generally.

ACT officials track students who have taken assessments as high school students as they progress through college although only a small percentage of the

one million or so high school students who take ACT assessments go to colleges that participate in college-level ACT testing programs that would have data available for analysis. From a representative sample of 18 colleges in 14 states participating in these programs, and selected by ACT research personnel, a list was drawn of 8,063 students for whom both high school and college records were accessible.[14] Surveys were mailed to 2,687 college students randomly selected from this list in late March 1986. Because of time constraints, no follow-up mailing was possible to non-respondents, and a final number of 558 surveys (21%) were available for this study.

The return rate was a bit low for a mailed questionnaire because permanent addresses were used on the mailing, and many of the students in the study were away at college, causing parents/guardians to have to forward the mail to them. A postage-paid return envelope was provided.

Respondents are <u>not</u> typical of the sample selected, as might be expected with the relatively low return rate. For example, respondents earned significantly higher scores (t test, $p<.001$) in each of the following academic measures: ACT Composite score (one often used by colleges as an admissions and placement standard); ACT scores in English, mathematics, social studies and natural science; the high school grade point average in English; and the collegiate grade point average. Also, females tended to be more responsive to the survey than males (72.6% of the 558 respondents were female compared with 64.3 % in the total sample; conversely, 27.4% of the respondents were male compared with 35.7% in the total sample). Minority students are also underrepresented in the 558 usable surveys. The total sample included 10.9% minority students (Black, Indian, Chicano, Asian, Hispanic and other), but only 6.9% of the respondents were

among these minority groups. The largest of these groups, Blacks, had a return rate of only 2% in a total sample of 4.6%. On the other hand, 92.4% of the respondents were white compared with a total sample of 88.2%.

While a more representative sample would be ideal, the current analysis is nevertheless of value as long as one realizes the demographic idiosyncrasies. In summary, the 558 respondents represent academically superior students who tend to be non-minority females.

Results and Discussion

Language Arts Survey[15]

Overall results of the 29-item survey of language arts competencies show that students who had taken high school journalism classes perceived those classes to fulfill more adequately language arts objectives than did any other classes (Table 1). The students who had not had journalism rated their Standard (required) English classes as best fulfilling the competencies, but the intensity of response is weaker than that given journalism classes by those who had taken a credit class (65.87 for Journalism Courses compared with 62.35 for non-journalism students' rating of Standard English courses).

Third highest in the rankings was the Other Elective area as rated by those who did not have a journalism class. It received a 61.02 total score.

Fourth and fifth in the rankings were Standard English and Other Electives, respectively, as rated by journalism students. Interestingly, journalism students' ratings of both of those areas are weaker than the ratings students not having had a credit journalism course gave to the same two language arts categories of courses. Students who have had journalism believe it fulfills overall language arts

TABLE 1

Rank Order and Total Scores of ACT High School Language Arts Experiences Survey Comparing Journalism, Standard English and Other Electives

Academic Area	Journalism Class?	Total Score	Average Per Item (3-point scale)
1. Journalism	yes	65.87[a]	2.27
2. Standard English	no	62.35[c]	2.15
3. Other Electives	no	61.02[e]	2.10
4. Standard English	yes	60.78[a]	2.10
5. Other Electives	yes	60.72[b]	2.09
6. Journalism	no	56.83[d]	1.96

[a] n=143
[b] n=88
[c] n=415
[d] n=162
[e] n=240

competencies better than Standard English or Other Elective courses, while those students not having had a course in Journalism rate Standard English highest and Other Electives next. Compared with their Journalism Course experience, journalism students rate both Standard English and Other Electives lower than those who have not had a Journalism Course.

By contrast, the lowest rating of all (56.83) comes from students who took some type of journalism experience for credit, but it was not listed as a "journalism" class per se. These people took newspaper lab or yearbook lab for credit. The low rating would indicate that these students did not believe publications lab experiences for credit did as good a job at fulfilling the 29 language arts competencies as did either Standard English or Other Electives. Further, while those who took a Journalism Class rated it more strongly than any other group rated any other language arts classes, and thus one might argue that

these classes might easily fulfill high school English requirements or electives, some caution should be applied in this area when looking at publications labs for credit.

In examining the 29 competencies and comparisons among the subject areas, several observations might be made (Table 2).

TABLE 2

Raw Scores of ACT High School Language Arts Experiences Survey of College Freshmen Comparing Those Students Who Took a High School Credit Course in Journalism with Those Students Who Did Not Take a Journalism Credit Course

Competency	Standard English		Journalism Course		Other Electives	
	Journalism (n=143)	Non-Journalism (n=415)	Journalism (n=143)	Non-Journalism (n=159)	Journalism (n=88)	Non-Journalism (n=240)
1. Ability to develop topic ideas for writing.	2.41	2.42	2.41***	1.98	2.21	2.45
2. Ability to organize a piece of writing for a specific purpose and audience.	2.42	2.44	2.56***	2.12	2.48	2.60
3. Ability to organize, select, and relate ideas, outline them, and develop them into coherent paragraphs.	2.65	2.63	2.39***	1.97	2.20	2.38
4. Ability to write Standard English sentences in correct sentence structure using appropriate verb forms, punctuation, capitalization, possessives, plurals, word choice, and correct spelling.	2.67	2.74	2.09***	1.79	1.79	1.83
5. Ability to vary writing style for different readers and purposes.	2.02	2.07	2.51***	2.05	2.21	2.42**
6. Ability to improve writing through self-editing--correcting errors, and rewriting sentences and paragraphs.	2.26	2.12	2.65***	2.24	1.98	2.00
7. Ability to gather information from primary and secondary sources, to write a report using this research, to quote, paraphrase and summarize accurately, and to cite sources properly.	2.42	2.49	2.39***	1.99	2.12	2.34

Competency	Standard English		Journalism Courses		Other Electives	
	Journalism (n=143)	Non-Journalism (n=415)	Journalism (n=143)	Non-Journalism (n=159)	Journalism (n=88)	Non-Journalism (n=240)
8. Development of a writing style applicable to either fiction or non-fiction.	2.15	1.99	1.93**	1.64	2.01	2.00
9. Ability to write non-fiction concisely, with clarity, accuracy, and objectivity.	2.17	2.19	2.41***	1.97	1.94	1.97
10. Ability to edit, for a specific audience, the writing of others.	1.78	1.87	2.57***	2.15	1.79	2.03
11. Ability to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in a written work and to summarize them.	2.52	2.45	2.05**	1.75	1.84	2.00**
12. Ability to separate personal opinions and assumptions from those of a writer.	1.99	2.15	2.37***	1.89	1.93	2.10
13. Ability to engage critically and constructively in the exchange of ideas, particularly during class discussions and conferences with instructors.	2.11	2.19	2.22	2.00	2.36	2.36
14. Ability to answer and ask questions coherently and concisely, and to follow spoken instructions.	2.16	2.26	2.31*	2.08	2.11	2.27
15. Ability to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in lectures and discussions and to report accurately what others have said.	2.03	2.08	2.37***	2.02	2.11	2.17
16. Ability to use appropriate spoken language with diverse individuals and groups.	1.94	2.07	2.12**	1.82	2.44*	2.33
17. Ability to identify and formulate problems and to propose and evaluate ways to solve them.	1.84	1.86	2.06	1.95	2.05	2.01
18. Ability to recognize and use inductive and deductive reasoning, and to recognize errors in reasoning.	1.90	1.92	1.85*	1.61	1.88	1.96
19. Ability to write persuasively about issues related to school and non-school issues.	2.02	2.14	2.54***	2.19	2.34	2.36
20. Ability to draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources, whether written, spoken, or in tables and graphs.	2.13	2.24	2.24***	1.84	2.07	2.14

Competency	Standard English		Journalism Courses		Other Electives	
	Journalism (n=143)	Non-Journalism (n=415)	Journalism (n=143)	Non-Journalism (n=159)	Journalism (n=88)	Non-Journalism (n=240)
21. Ability to comprehend, develop, and use concepts and generalization.	2.41	2.38	2.13**	1.82	2.12	2.20
22. Ability to accept constructive criticism and learn from it.	2.26	2.37	2.51	2.36	2.67	2.64
23. Ability to understand and synthesize main ideas from reading, lectures, and other academic experiences; and to apply information to new situations.	2.29	2.28	2.12***	1.77	2.18	2.16
24. Ability to develop specialized vocabularies, and to use them for reading, writing, speaking, listening, computing, and studying.	2.36	2.33	2.33***	1.93	2.45	2.26
25. Ability to communicate with peers and older people on a professional level.	2.04	2.11	2.50	2.31	2.53	2.47
26. Ability to deal with conflicts while working with other people on a project.	1.64	1.81	2.51	2.51	2.29	2.19
27. Development of a sense of responsibility, leadership, and personal maturity.	1.85	1.88	2.66	2.56	2.40	2.31
28. Development of self-confidence, personal worth, and self-esteem.	1.99	1.98	2.59	2.46	2.57	2.52
29. Development of a sense of accomplishment and involvement in the school and community.	1.72	1.84	2.65	2.60	2.32	2.23

* within-group chi square significant beyond the .05 level
** within-group chi square significant beyond the .01 level
*** within-group chi square significant beyond the .001 level

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Students who had taken Journalism rated it best in 15 of 29 competency areas, and in one other area Journalism tied with Standard English as a top competency. Journalism students selected Standard English as best in eight of 29 competencies, and they selected five items as top choices in the Other Elective category.

In Table 2, Journalism surfaces as a No. 1 choice in the following items:

2. Ability to organize a piece of writing for a specific purpose and audience; 5. Ability to vary writing style for different readers and purposes; 6. Ability to improve writing through self-editing -- correcting errors, and rewriting sentences and paragraphs; 9. Ability to write non-fiction concisely, with clarity, accuracy and objectivity; 10. Ability to edit, for a specific audience, the writing of others; 12. Ability to separate personal opinions and assumptions from those of a writer; 14. Ability to answer and ask questions coherently and concisely, and to follow spoken instructions; 15. Ability to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in lectures and discussions and to report accurately what others have said; 17. Ability to identify and formulate problems and to propose and evaluate ways to solve them; 19. Ability to write persuasively about issues related to school and non-school issues; 20. Ability to draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources, whether written, spoken or displayed in tables and graphs; 26. Ability to deal with conflicts while working with other people on a project; 27. Development of a sense of responsibility, leadership and personal maturity; 28. Development of self-confidence, personal worth and self-esteem; and 29. Development of a sense of accomplishment and involvement in the school and community.

Additionally, journalism students rated competency 1 on the survey as a tie between Standard English courses and Journalism: Ability to develop topic ideas for writing.

Students who took journalism rated nine of the remaining 13 competencies as their second choices in fulfilling competencies (numbers 3, 4, 7, 11, 13, 16, 21, 22, and 25 of Table 2). In only four of the 29 competencies did students who took journalism rate Journalism Courses lowest of the three areas -- numbers 8, 18, 23

and 24 of Table 2.

Within each of the three language arts areas examined -- Standard English, Journalism and Other Electives -- chi square tests were used to examine differences of answering patterns in the three-point scale between those students who took Journalism as a class compared with those students who had not. The most notable number of significant differences occurred within the Journalism Course area. Twenty-one of 29 competencies proved to be significantly different (items 1-12, 14-16, 18-21 and 23-24 of Table 2).

A possible explanation for such consistent differences, especially compared with relatively few found in either Standard English or Other Electives, might be that when journalism is taught as a regular class, the teacher is most likely to hold certification or other expertise in journalism. In many schools where this is not the case, administrators might not allow a formal class to be offered, or might call the class by some other name so as to avoid accreditation or state department difficulties. Names like "Publications," "Practical English," "Yearbook," "Newspaper," or "English Practicum" are not uncommon.

In these classes, which are often heavy in laboratory exercises or production of actual school publications, students might lack the guidance of a qualified journalism teacher or be so consumed with production emphasis that they are not perceiving that many of the 29 competencies chosen as language arts objectives are being met. Also, these students have <u>not</u> had a formal journalism course before their publications lab experience and have missed out in learning fundamental principles, theories, discipline and practices available in a traditional classroom situation.

This does not mean that school publications are not valuable as co-curricular

activities. Earlier citations clearly show their worth. Also, recent JEA/ACT data suggest that publications students perform significantly better in several academic areas in high school, on college entrance examinations and in the first year of college.[16] It means that students don't believe publications experience alone is a worthy substitute for an academic class in journalism when it comes to fulfilling language arts competencies, nor do they see it as being as meaningful as they see Standard English or Other Electives. So while a reasonable conclusion might be that Journalism as a class in language arts is the strongest of all in meeting the 29 competencies, it is also safe to conclude that the same competencies are least met through publications experience unaccompanied by or not preceded by a class.

In the Standard (required) English comparisons between those who had taken a Journalism Class and those who had not, no statistically significant differences were observed, but it is worthy to note that in 21 of 29 competencies students with a Journalism Class in their backgrounds found Standard English courses to be less fulfilling than those who had not taken Journalism (Table 2).

Analysis of the Other Electives comparisons between those with a Journalism class background and those without shows a similar pattern. In 17 of the 29 language arts competencies examined, those with a Journalism Course background rated Other Electives lower than those who had not taken a journalism class. As seen in Table 2, two of those 17 comparisons were significantly lower while only one of the 12 rated higher was significantly different.

In order to see some general relationships among the 29 competencies, they were subdivided into six logical categories, each of which being comprised of two

or more of the 29 items. The categories and the competency items assigned to each: **Writing**, numbers 1, 5, 8, 9 and 19; **Editing**, numbers 2, 3, 6 and 10; **Gathering Information/Use of Sources**, numbers 7 and 15; **Critical Thinking**, numbers 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 23; **Language Use**, numbers 4, 16 and 24; and **Affective Domain**, numbers 22, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29.

Table 3 shows total scores when competencies from Table 2 have been assigned and summed within each of the six categories of language arts. These summed scores also show comparisons between the way those students who had taken a high school Journalism Course answered the questions in comparison with those who had not had a Journalism Course. Non-journalism students are listed in parentheses within Table 3.

Journalism students rated four of the six category areas as having fulfilled competencies better than Standard English or Other Electives: Writing, Editing, Gathering/Use of Sources and Affective Domain. It was second in Critical Thinking to Standard English by a close margin (18.58 compared with 18.85 in English) and it was third in Language Use, but in this area it was almost the same as Other Electives (6.31 compared with 6.33) and fairly close to Standard English (6.31 compared with Standard English's 6.85). In the two areas in which Journalism Courses did not finish first, Standard English was the top choice.

In the three major course areas in Table 3, t tests were applied to examine significant differences between those students who took Journalism for credit compared with those who did not have a Journalism Class. No significant differences were found between the two sets of students in either Standard English or Other Electives; however, significant differences were found between the two groups within the Journalism Course category in each of the six competency

TABLE 3

Summed Scores of Language Arts Competency-Area Analysis Comparing Those College Students Who Had Taken a High School Credit Course in Journalism with Those Who Had Not, and Their Ratings of High School Standard English Courses, Journalism Courses, and Other Elective Courses

	Standard English Courses	Journalism Courses	Other Elective Courses
	Journalism (Non-J) n=143 (n=415)	Journalism (Non-J) n=143 (n=162)	Journalism (Non-J) n=88 (n=240)
Competency Area			
Writing	10.53 (10.62)	11.35 (9.34)***	10.20 (10.38)
Editing	8.89 (9.20)	9.84 (8.01)***	7.99 (8.53)
Gathering/Use of Sources	4.39 (4.48)	4.64 (3.90)***	4.15 (4.34)
Critical Thinking	18.85 (19.37)	18.58 (15.94)***	17.42 (17.89)
Language Use	6.85 (7.04)	6.31 (5.36)***	6.33 (6.03)
Affective Domain	11.27 (11.64)	15.15 (14.28)*	14.63 (13.85)

* t test difference significant beyond the .05 level
*** t test difference significant beyond the .001 level

areas. In each case, those who took a class in Journalism rated it higher than those who had taken credit for yearbook, newspaper, publications or some media experience not specifically called Journalism.

Thus, as seen in both Tables 2 and 3, Journalism Courses rate highest in fulfilling the 29 competencies and the six categories of additional analysis. And, language arts credit generated from experience on a school publication in which the students have not taken a Journalism Course prior to or during that experience is rated generally less satisfactory than any other of the comparisons. It would seem highly advisable, then, for schools to offer a classroom Journalism Course before granting credit for other publications experience while avoiding

offering traditional language arts credits for experiences in which students have not had the benefit of a Journalism Course.

Table 3 also shows that while no other comparisons between journalism and non-journalism students are significantly different in either Standard English or Other Elective classes, in 10 of 12 comparisons between the two groups journalism students ranked competencies lower than those who had not taken a Journalism Course. So, combined with Journalism Course's high showing in its own area, it would seem journalism students find other Standard English and Other Elective courses not as suitable in meeting the language arts competencies examined. Those without a Journalism Course experience, by contrast, rate their experiences in Standard English and Other Electives higher --though not significantly higher-- in 10 of 12 comparisons. In all six competency areas of Standard English, non-journalism students had higher scores than journalism students. In four of six Other Elective course categories -- all except Language Use and Affective Domain -- non-journalism students rated competencies higher than journalism students.

Perhaps because the Journalism Course experience was strong in fulfilling the competencies, journalism students' attitudes about other language arts courses were less positive by comparison.

Open-Response Item[17]

Of the 558 surveys examined, 269 included responses to the open-response item at the end of the survey: "If you have suggestions for teachers of the high school language arts courses that would benefit future college students, please list your ideas in the space below."

Only 15 of 269 surveys mentioned journalism, and all of these were interpreted as positive statements. (As noted earlier, this small number substantiates the researcher's confidence that the survey measured language arts experiences generally. That is, while journalism was a key variable in the study, students were not aware that is was being tested any more so than Standard English, Other Electives or any other facet of the high school language arts program.) Analysis of the remaining 254 surveys revealed 408 areas or ideas for improvement students believed would be of benefit for high school teachers to apply in preparing others for college.

Journalism-Related Responses

Several comments attest to the value of journalism or publications experience in meeting the rigors of college academic expectations. One student wrote about the value of a yearbook experience as it related to expressing complex ideas in concrete terms and in doing research:

> Writing style in college seems a lot different than in high school. In research analysis we have learned to write complex tasks (like factorial design experiment) in simple terms for anyone to understand. In high school we wrote with much more fillers and "jargon." College professors frown on that. I wish I had done more research in high school. I would have been more prepared. Yearbook has prepared me for college way more than any English class did.

Another student was pleased with high school preparation in using grammar and a wide vocabulary. The person found that journalism was helpful in applying college-level styles of writing to term papers or analysis papers.

Other important college-level abilities were nurtured through electives as well. One student wrote about debate, forensics and journalism for their immediate and long-term values:

> The classes that most helped me not only throughout high school but also well into college were debate and forensics. There is no substitute for the experience these programs give the student in composing thoughts quickly and effectively, or in appearing in an interview or public speaking scenario. However, it is also important to realize that these programs force the student to accept responsibility -- the instructor cannot do the student's work for him. I believe that this aspect of debate and forensics can *and must* be applied to the "Standard English courses." It is the individual responsibility that journalism class places upon the student that helps that student most. It is the responsibility placed on the student that best prepares him most not only for his post-secondary education but also for "real life."

Another student thought English shouldn't be taught "straight from books" but should focus on basic structures for each year of the curriculum. Other structures or types of writing included "organizing skills -- spatial, chronological, etc.; choice of wording -- poetic, technical, etc.; and various writing styles -- business, journalism, informal, fiction, etc."

Writing of college research papers was mentioned by several students who had taken journalism in high school. One wrote:

> Students should be required to write papers often so they are prepared to do so in college. A section teaching them how to do library research would also be helpful. I recommend taking a journalism class and also stressing more reading with class discussion. These are all helpful once you graduate whether you continue school or work.

Others had advice concerning emphasis areas or approaches to the handling of the classroom:

> Emphasize a little more on grammar and writing -- a little less on literature. Get students ready for college, and don't be so lenient on things such as writing and term papers. Teach students the proper way of writing these things. Journalism, Newspaper and Yearbook help a lot in learning the proper way to do these things; therefore, all three should be counted as a credit.

Similarly, one student wrote that journalism and English elective courses helped more than Standard English: "I suggest incorporating these language arts into Standard English courses for those students who would not choose electives."

Others compared Standard English and Journalism with respect to areas in

the affective domain -- interesting classes, broadening perspectives, and the like. One student wrote:

> Teachers of Standard English classes seemed apathetic about the class -- it was not challenging. I had Basic English which was required freshman year, then electives such as Speech, Journalism, and Debate for the last three years. I learned more from the elective classes because the teachers seemed more involved and the work more involved and interesting.

Another student thought Standard English courses "tried to cover too many things in one term." The most beneficial courses for this person were electives "such as British Literature and Newspaper. (These were also the most interesting courses.)"

Some students stressed the importance of co-curricular activities within the school that broadened their outlooks and related what they learned to non-school situations:

> Encourage high school students to be involved with outside activities, such as Drama, Yearbook or Newspaper staff to broaden their opinions of people and the way we utilize the English language other than in the classroom. I was greatly involved, and it has helped me in my college career.

Continuing this line of reasoning, another student who did not take publications and co-curriculars for credit wrote:

> The Standard English classes I took helped me learn the basics -- grammar, punctuation, etc., but I learned that in grade school. High school English was a mere repetition. Working on Debate/Speech team and Newspaper/Yearbook for no credit is what helped me TREMENDOUSLY! (Need to put elective English classes back in the system!)

These few comments of respondents clearly support the more formal findings of the survey: Journalism and related publications experience accomplish unique learning objectives in a positive environment for students.

Non-Journalism-Related Responses

Analysis of 408 ideas generated from 254 college students is summarized in Table 4. While these ideas might not have direct bearing upon Journalism as such, they seem pertinent to language arts courses generally, and would thus have at least indirect application to Journalism and English courses. Also, in light of evidence presented in the first part of this paper, it would seem that a Journalism Course does fulfill many students' suggestions listed below, and educators designing curricula might find the student feedback of use as they structure course syllabi and lesson plans in all language arts areas.

A brief digest and some student comments in each of the 13 items in Table 4 follows. It should be noted that basic writing skills were mentioned most (15.7%) with the development of various writing styles a close second (15.0%). Students thought the assignment of much writing was third most important (10.3%), the teaching of worthwhile literature and developing of reading skills fourth (9.6%) and offering challenging courses, with high grading standards, was fifth (9.3%).

Following those five items: Include speech/debate/drama/interpersonal communication (7.6%), emphasize research and term papers (7.1%), develop a positive attitude among students (6.1%), teach analysis of one's own and others' writing (5.9%), teach critical thinking, organization skills (4.9%), hold interesting classes (2.2%), and teach study skills (2.0%). Miscellaneous ideas accounted for 4.4% of the remaining responses.

1. Teach Basic Writing Skills

Students saw a fundamental need for high school language arts teachers to cover vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and other fundamentals of English. One

TABLE 4

Number and Percentage of Mentions: Suggestions College Students Have For High School Language Arts Teachers

Ranking	Item	Mentions	Percentage
1.	Teach basic writing skills	64	15.7%
2.	Develop and encourage various writing styles	61	15.0%
3.	Assign much writing	42	10.3%
4.	Teach worthwhile literature and develop reading skills	39	9.6%
5.	Teach challenging courses; be a demanding grader	38	9.3%
6.	Include speech/debate/drama/interpersonal communication	31	7.6%
7.	Emphasize research and term papers	29	7.1%
8.	Develop a positive attitude among students	25	6.1%
9.	Teach editing of one's own and others' writing	24	5.9%
10.	Teach critical thinking, organizational skills	20	4.9%
11.	Hold interesting classes	9	2.2%
12.	Teach study skills	8	2.0%
13.	Other, miscellaneous	18	4.4%
	TOTAL 408		100.1%

n of respondents = 254

The percentage column does not add up to 100% because of rounding

student wrote: "I've found college professors much more demanding in these areas than what was expected of my performance in high school and what I was prepared for." In a similar way, another student wrote:

> When I was in high school, I believed my English education was adequate. However, since going to college I've found my writing to be extremely inadequate. The basics are where I believe I and many other students are lacking. I would suggest to high

> school teachers to work on basic writing (and spelling) skills. Creative writing is important, but the ability to write a clear, developed, organized paper or statement is what is important in college. Analysis is very, very important, but that I learned in mathematics.

Another student urged secondary school teachers to teach students so that they have a "firm grip" of so-called "elementary basics." The student wrote: "Punctuation is something that I felt I always need more of -- commas, colons and the like. If all else fails, make *sure* they know *BASICS* !!!"

To another college student, the biggest problem in both high school and college was the lack of proper grammar and punctuation use: "It is rare to find someone who punctuates correctly, who writes active sentences and makes subjects and verbs agree. *Teach the basics* and then the writing styles and techniques will evolve."

2. Develop and Encourage Various Writing Styles

The 61 mentions of this suggestion took numerous forms in the open-ended response. Most students mentioned the value of learning many different genres of writing, and they gave examples like composition, themes, business reports, informal and formal reports, criticism and creative writing. A number of them were concerned with development of a personal writing style. Some expressed the importance of developing a sensitivity for the audience for whom the writing is intended. Others were concerned that impromptu writing, under deadline pressure, be incorporated into high school English because of the need to answer essay questions under similar conditions in college.

In a worst-case scenario concerning one school's writing program, one student wrote:

> My school did not offer any composition classes. We did very few compositions. Therefore, as a college student in freshman composition and in other classes, my papers have been below the class average as far as grades are concerned. I feel that high schools should prepare the student to select a topic, be able to organize thoughts, and compose essays with ease by the time they graduate. I was among the unfortunate who didn't have that opportunity.

Students offered several specific suggestions to reach the goal of achieving a varied and good writing style. One mentioned writing several short papers of three to five pages on various themes in literature. Another found too much formality in high school writing: "I wish my high school teachers would have allowed more room to expand our ideas in our own individual ways. I would write to please teachers, and that is missing the whole point of writing!"

Some students suggested that practice with a number of styles of writing would be most useful: Rather than just teaching expository writing, teachers should encourage development of argumentative, persuasive, definition, comparison/contrast, cause/effect and process papers. Along with these ideas, one student wrote of the need for audience sensitivity and the importance of varied writing styles:

> An emphasis should be placed on writing to a specific audience as well as being able to communicate with that audience. After high school, one learns that she must be able to speak, write, and communicate well on any level that may arise. And as easy as that idea appears to be, it isn't because any given situation may be different and one has to be able to adapt and adjust to it.

3. Assign Much Writing

As one student so forcefully put it: "Write, write, write, write, write, write. That is the thing we did the least of and needed the most. Also, a lot of assigned reading helps because it builds vocabulary and writing ability."

In general, besides numerous students who listed similar sentiments about

doing extensive writing in high school, others issued criticisms about balance in language arts. A few complained that literature was emphasized at the expense of writing. Another few were distressed that grammar, punctuation and other language study were taught separately from the writing experience itself, and therefore tended to trivialize the writing process.

One student who had a positive writing background in high school recounted a horror story regarding some friends' poor preparations in writing:

> *Make them write!* Teach them to write correctly. I was blessed with great English teachers who taught me early how to write a topic sentence, a good paragraph and a good essay; how to read a story or play and write an essay about a topic in a work (of literature). I have friends who flunked out of Honors English classes in college, not because they weren't intelligent, but because they *couldn't write.*

Similarly, another student responded that teachers should assign more essays because "I know many college freshmen who have never written an essay," and because of this first collegiate writing courses are unnecessarily difficult. This student wrote that even though high school students might not like the idea of writing more, they will appreciate it when going on to college (should they go).

4. Teach Worthwhile Literature and Develop Reading Skills

Students expressed several reasons why and how teachers should attend to the reading and analysis of literature among high school students. While several suggestions included teaching the classics so that great issues of history might be explored, others recommended emphasis on current literature and current events.

One student claimed that material used in public high schools is not advanced enough and that books of higher intelligence should be used. A similar comment came from another student:

> In college, 99% of my homework is reading. I *never* realized how much reading I would have to do, and how *quickly!* Don't baby high school students by spreading a book over a few months. Force them to get used to reading or they will fall behind in college classes.

Another person thought textbook emphasis in high school should be changed to novel and other fiction emphasis. A few persons in the study expressed the importance of reading more books of fiction as a preparation for college.

Others thought literature study helped trace man's thinking through time, and it helped people today know themselves better. One respondent summarized the thinking of what a few others in the study also expressed:

> The part of my English courses that I feel helped develop my maturity and personal insight was the discussion of literature. Discussing a piece of literature (a novel for example) can cover almost every aspect of the English language: vocabulary, sentence structure, style, theme, character analysis, deep *meaning*. Not only does one learn more about the composition of English but also a concept to be dwelled upon and applied to one's own life is obtained as well. *I suggest that teachers continue to analyze literature.*

Some were critical of the way literature was taught in high school. "Teachers should be able to explain to a student *why* and *what makes* a piece of literature great." The same person continued, "Merely saying 'This is great literature. Read it' does not justify to the student why he/she should devote time and energy to reading and comprehending a work."

And a few other students thought English teachers ought to encourage a positive attitude toward literature while at the same time providing for practice of reading comprehension and retention.

5. Teach Challenging Courses; Be a Demanding Grader

Current college students in the study listed several ideas for making their high school language arts experiences more difficult and intellectually rigorous.

They recommended such things as eliminating much of the busy work, being more demanding in each course in terms of both amount of work and grading policies, requiring greater involvement in course work that pushed them toward greater involvement with other school activities and the community, and creating a wider range of classes or adding Advanced Placement or college-bound honors classes -- especially in the smaller schools.

Indicative of several responses in this area came from a student who compared high school and college language arts classes:

> Make courses *harder!* I was a B+ student all through high school and *never* had to study! I didn't learn how to study until I got to college. High school is *far* too easy. Teach the basics earlier -- I didn't learn grammar well until I took an elective course in College Prep. Grammar (my senior year). The skills that *every* student should know well are only being taught in the advanced courses that are electives and not requireds! It makes college that much tougher when you have to learn the things you should have learned or been taught in high school! High school is *lots of fun* (a 4-year party!) but it needs to include lots of tough academic skills as well.

Another thought demanding grading policies should be the norm in high school so that "students understand that everything is interrelated."

Someone else perceived high school classes, other than Honors English, as boring. Other students were concerned with teachers' methods and approaches:

> Be critical, strict, give a lot of *constructive* criticism so it gets pounded into students' heads. They'll hate you then, but the students will love you later when they realize what college writing is all about. Do more with outlining and topic sentences.

Similarly, another respondent wanted grading procedures to toughen as the high school experience progressed, so that by the end of senior year teachers would "grade as if a college professor or teaching assistant would grade. The easy A's I got in high school were suddenly shockingly C's in college."

\6. Include Speech/Debate/Drama/Interpersonal Communication

In addition to the usual concern with stage fright, several students recommended paying more attention to class discussions because, as one student put it, "I feel that a student can learn more from them rather than one individual giving notes for an hour."

One college student was frustrated in knowing the material well but still being unable to participate in small-group discussions: "Class discussions should be more heavily emphasized in high school English classes."

Another described the helpfulness of a high school drama experience: "Although drama was not especially helpful to me in the writing part of language arts, it was tremendously helpful in my ability to deal with others and adjust to the social life at college."

7. Emphasize Research and Term Papers

Rationale for learning research methods and doing term papers was expressed in both intrinsic and utilitarian terms. One student wrote:

> I think teachers ought to allow students to engage in worthwhile, in-depth research papers each year in high school. I think this type of work will allow students to learn on their own, especially to develop a skill for finding answers to their questions. My teacher allowed me to do this and it helped me greatly -- much more than I could ever express.

Another student lamented the lack of high school experience with the research process, because as a result "I struggle with the ability to gather information from various sources, formulate it, draw conclusions and give a presentation based upon that information."

One respondent seemed more concerned with the practical benefits that

accompanied writing a term paper in high school:

> This helped me a lot when I had to write one for a college course. As a senior I took Honors English -- a course designed to stimulate thought, discussion and written communication. I think this course really helped me to develop my writing style. I was able to pass a CLEP test for Freshman Comp.

Another student wrote that in college students might take only two semesters of formal English, but in many classes they would be required to write research papers. This person's advice about high school writing emphasis: "I would like to see the focus move in this direction and away from literature classes. I think students will benefit more from having strong writing ability, rather than poetry and reading abilities."

8. Develop a Positive Attitude Among Students

In general, this item of student concerns pointed out the weaknesses of teacher approaches and personalities while emphasizing the need for the building of self-esteem in high school language arts classes.

Some criticisms included "exhibiting a superior, cold attitude," "not being excited and involved in course work," "emphasizing that 'this is how they do it in college' but being so out of touch they wouldn't even recognize a college rhetoric course," being "far too critical, slow to change and unreceptive to new and different viewpoints," "grading that offered no explanation or constructive criticism" but just a letter grade, and "lecturing rather than making learning fun." Another student suggested, "Try to explain things in a modern-day situation. People can learn and relate better."

One student described individual differences in approaches between college and high school teachers:

> I learned more about the English language after leaving secondary school. I was given positive criticism in college whereas in high school only the negative points were made. This does tend to make a person question his worth. High school teachers should be careful because much talent could be lost with discouraged students who don't attend college.

Similarly, another student talked about differences between Standard English and Other Electives from high school and how those affected college writing courses:

> I was constantly told in high school that I had no writing aptitude whatsoever, and that I'd probably never make it in college -- yet, I've yet to get below an A on a college essay. Standard English courses served to lower my self-esteem, and I really believe everything I've learned about writing I've had to learn through trial and error. The others (creative electives) made me feel good about myself.

And another student encouraged high school teachers to "make students work hard so that they can feel good about themselves and feel good about what they have accomplished."

9. Teach Editing of One's Own and Others' Writing

Several suggestions were provided in the editing area: to provide more individual help; to learn proficiency in peer editing and ultimately self-editing; and to hold more writing discussions with peers and teachers.

One person recommended requiring rough drafts for most papers, with plenty of feedback from the teacher and others before the final version is written.

Another wrote of the value of peer editing:

> Let the students help each other to straighten out their mistakes and learn from each other. Sometimes one student can explain something to another student better than a teacher, and both students learn from it. The teaching student is forced to apply and explain her learnings better, and the other student might realize and understand what the teacher is trying to say.

A student who had experienced this form of peer evaluation wrote, "I learned the most by exchanging papers with other students to see how my writing ability compared with theirs."

10. Teach Critical Thinking, Organizational Skills

Students were concerned with the devlopment of logical thought and organization , depth approaches to topics, expansion of open-mindedness and world viewpoints, and proficiency in writing thesis statements that were backed up with facts.

One student wrote about the value of persuasion:

> From my experience, writing non-fictional persuasive papers began to provide me with a strong basis for developing logical thinking and proper word choice. After much practice in writing this way, I could better deduce other concepts in the world around me.

Another person suggested that teachers "challenge your students to think about and argue various viewpoints" by discussing issues and concepts that are not totally grasped by students on a certain level -- to push them beyond their experience. "Force the students to evaluate and form opinions about real situations."

11. Hold Interesting Classes

Typical of the nine short responses in this area was one student's advice that

teachers "not get overburdened with tests and textbook rules; instead, have class discussions in order for the student to receive feedback and bring the 'big picture' down to a more personal level."

12. Teach Study Skills

In this area, students emphasized improving the following competencies in language arts courses: taking good notes, studying for tests, outlining readings or one's own notes and papers, and creating other study habits that will help students cope with the competitive atmosphere of college.

13. Other, Miscellaneous

Even though foreign languages were not included in this study, five students mentioned their importance in learning other language arts skills. Five other mentions were made of the general importance for high schoolers to take four full years of English courses. The other statements dealt with extraneous ideas like the differences between private and public education and the importance of following a national curriculum in language arts.

It would not be inconsistent with earlier findings to suggest that a well-taught Journalism Course might directly fulfill 10 of the 12 major suggestions of students in the free-response items described above. For example, journalism students rated four of six competencies learned in Journalism Courses higher than ones fulfilled in Standard English. The following competencies from Table 3 and the items that might be covered by them from Table 4 include:

Writing: Item 1. Teach basic writing skills; Item 2. Develop and encourage various writing styles; and Item 3. Assign much writing.

Editing: Item 5. Teach challenging courses; be a demanding grader; Item 9. Teach editing of one's own and others' writing; and Item 10. Teach critical thinking, organizational skills.

Gathering/Use of Sources: Item 7. Emphasize research and term papers.

Affective Domain: Item 6. Include speech/debate/drama/interpersonal communication; Item 8. Develop a positive attitude among students; and Item 11. Hold interesting classes.

Further, the teaching of study skills and the teaching of worthwhile literature, Items 12 and 4, could be included in a journalism course as well. It seems clear from the results of the 29-item survey that students perceive journalism fulfilling the competencies to a stronger degree than Standard English or Other Electives. While any of the three areas perhaps could and should be addressing these needs, at present Journalism seems to be accomplishing those language arts objectives tested in stronger fashion than the other two areas.

Student Profile

Strong implications for colleges and the media professions in attracting bright students have been found in the present study. In another ACT study, those students who had newspaper or yearbook staff experience in high school were about four times more likely to select Communications (journalism, radio/television broadcasting or advertising) as a college major than were those with no publications experience.[18] In the current study, students who had both high school publications experience *and* a course called Journalism were 10

times more likely to select it as a college major or as a career choice as those who had neither experience.

Indeed, 25% of those in this study who took a Journalism Course for credit indicated that they were majoring in Communications in college whereas only about 2.55% of those with neither selected it as their major. And those who had taken a high school Journalism Course were more likely to take a journalism or communications class in college than those who did not take one in high school (chi square $p<.001$). Similarly, the same students were also more likely to have embarked upon some experience with their college radio or television stations than those who had no high school Journalism Course (chi square $p<.001$).

Unlike earlier ACT studies showing that those with high school publications experience had significantly higher scores in college grade point average, ACT English Assessment scores, first college English grade and the final high school English course grade,[19] this survey found no significant differences between those with high school Journalism Courses and those who did not take them in those language arts areas. This might be due to the nature of the respondents in this study. As has been seen, they are generally stronger academically than non-respondents. Also, all students in the current study had served on the publications staff of their high schools, and these students have been shown to be academically superior to non-participants in ACT Composite scores, ACT English, ACT Social Studies, freshman college grade point average, first college English course, final high school courses taken in English, social studies, mathematics and natural science, and the final high school grade point average derived from the final high school courses (taken before the ACT Assessment) in English, social studies, mathematics and natural science.[20]

Summary and Conclusions

Results of this recent American College Testing Program language arts survey show that when compared with students who *did not* take a Journalism Course, those students who *did* take at least one high school Journalism Course tended to:

- Rate journalism as No. 1 in 16 of 29 general language arts competencies.
- Select Journalism Courses as having fulfilled the general language arts competencies better than either Standard English or Other Elective courses.
- Rate journalism higher than did the non-journalism students in Standard English or Other Elective courses.
- Select Journalism Courses as better fulfilling the following competencies than did either Standard English or Other Elective courses: writing, editing, gathering/use of sources, and affective domain.
- Have higher evaluations of most of the 29 language arts competencies in journalism courses than those students listed under the "Journalism Course" category but who had taken only "Newspaper" or "Yearbook" or some publications experience other than a Journalism Course.
- Have lesser opinions of Standard English courses or Other Elective courses in language arts than their counterparts with no journalism background.
- Write positively about their Journalism Course and publications experiences in open-ended responses in all 15 statements that included a mention of journalism.
- Be 10 times more likely to select communications (journalism, radio or television broadcasting, or advertising) as their college major than students who

had neither high school publications experience nor a course in high school journalism.

Secondary school language arts curriculum designers, teachers and administrators ought to accord journalism a substantial place within the curriculum. Its value is apparent from the survey results presented here and in other citations. It seems to fulfill many of the competencies advocated by various national and state commissions on excellence in education.

University journalism educators ought also realize the worth of high school journalism and accord it every possible consideration -- teacher training, outreach and other recruiting programs -- for through these programs come the next generation of college communication majors and teachers.

And media personnel ought to support high school (and collegiate) journalism programs. Evidence presented here indicates that talented students are involved in high school journalism. These students think highly of that experience and are 10 times more likely to major in college communications than those who haven't had a journalism class. These talented people are the next generation of professional journalists.

Footnotes

[1] Robert V. Koziol, "Future Trends in Journalism Education," *School Press Review* (February 1981), pp. 12-13.

[2] Jack Dvorak, "When It Comes to Co-Curriculars, Publications Experience Seen as No. 1 College Prep," *Iowa High School Press Association Newsletter* (February 1986), pp. 2-3.

[3] See, for example, John Bowen, "More than a Basic," *School Press Review* (Winter 1984), p. 20; Dennis Alan Cripe, "We Are What We Write," *School Press Review* (Winter 1984), p. 21; Clarence W. Hach, "How Journalism Instruction Meets the 10 Imperative Needs," *NASSP Bulletin* 59:26 (February 1975); Homer L. Hall, "Former Journalism Students Speak Out," *Communication: Journalism Education Today* (Summer 1984), pp. 9-15; Lynlea Hall, "Is High School Journalism Worth Keeping?" *Communication: Journalism Education Today* (Summer 1984), p. 20; Robert P. Knight, "Scholastic Journalism is of Age," (paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism annual convention, East Lansing, Michigan, August 1981); Lynn Shenkman, "Excellence in Journalism," *Florida Scholastic Press Association Newsletter* (Summer 1984); Rod Vahl, "Five-Star Priority," *School Press Review* (Winter 1984), p. 22; Wendy Weyen, "Benefits of a Strong Journalism Program," *Communication: Journalism Education Today* (Summer 1984), pp. 3-4.

[4] Linda Mook, "Report on Adviser Hearings Conducted by the Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education," in *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline* (Blue Springs, Missouri: Journalism Education Association, 1987), pp. 6-7.

[5] Nancy Ruth Patterson, "Representative Outstanding Journalism Programs," in *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline* (Blue Springs, Missouri: Journalism Education Association, 1987), p. 32.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

[7] Data were made available by David Weaver. They were collected for, but not used in, David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American Journalist: A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

[8] "American Society of Newspaper Editors Questionnaire Reveals High School Journalism Influences Professionals," in *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline* (Blue Springs, Missouri: Journalism Education Association, 1987), p. 47.

[9] David Weaver, Dan Drew and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "U.S. Television, Radio and Daily Newspaper Journalists," *Journalism Quarterly* 63:690 (Winter 1986).

[10] Journalism Education Association commission members who assisted the author in constructing the survey were John M. Butler, Julie Dodd and Tom Eveslage.

[11] See, for example, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.* The National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington: U.S. Department of Education, April 1983).; *First in the Nation in Education.* Final Report of the Iowa Excellence in Education Task Force (Des Moines: Iowa Legislative Council, 1984).; *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1983).; and *Educational Excellence for Iowa.* Final Report of the Joint Committee on Instructional Development and Academic Articulation in Iowa (Des Moines: Iowa State Board of Regents and the Department of Public Instruction, February 1984).

[12] James Maxey, senior research scientist at ACT, helped construct the questionnaire, and he pretested it in an undergraduate statistics class; thereafter, final modifications were made in the instrument before it was mailed.

[13] Having the instrument sent under the ACT letterhead also removed the influence a group like the Journalism Education Association might have if it had been written on its stationery or on the survey itself. Also, JEA Commission members believed that having the data collected by a nationally recognized and respected testing agency lent a great amount of credibility to respondents and to the report's outcome.

[14] The 18 colleges and universities from which students were selected: Alabama, South Alabama, Arizona State, Arkansas, DePaul, Northern Illinois, Illinois, Kansas, Hope College (Michigan), Detroit, Creighton, New Mexico State (Las Cruces), Ohio (Athens), Oklahoma State, Tennessee, Stephen F. Austin (Texas), Brigham Young and Wisconsin (Eau Claire).

[15] Data are based on "Results of ACT/JEA High School Language Arts Experience Survey," in *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline* (Blue Springs, Missouri: Journalism Education Association, 1987), pp. 86-99.

[16] See, for example, "Comparisons of College Grades, American College Testing (ACT) Scores and High School Grades Between Students with and Students without High School Newspaper or Yearbook Experience," in *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline* (Blue Springs, Missouri: Journalism Education Association, 1987), pp. 54-69; and "Comparisons of Collegiate Writing Samples Between Students with and Students without High School Newspaper or Yearbook Staff Experience," in *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline* (Blue Springs, Missouri: Journalism Education Association, 1987), pp. 70-85.

[17] Open-ended responses were collected as part of the 1987 study by the JEA Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education but were not included in its final report.

[18] *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline , op. cit.*, p. 80.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

[20] *Ibid.*

APPENDIX

ACT

March 21, 1986

Dear Student:

The enclosed survey has been designed to learn your reactions to various language arts experiences in high school. As you know, high schools are very interested in reviewing the learning experiences available for students. Hopefully, the data collected from this nationwide survey will enable ACT to provide useful information for curriculum improvement.

The mailing label on the survey will enable me to annex your responses to selected elements from the ACT Assessment. Your responses will be combined with hundreds of other students to develop group statistics only. Responses of individual students will never be released to anyone.

It will take you about 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. Please return the survey in the prepaid enclosed envelope. Return your survey to me within four days from the date you receive it.

I appreciate your help with this important study.

Sincerely,

James Maxey

James Maxey, Director and
Senior Research Scientist
Institutional Services
Research Division

JM:jf

Enclosure

2201 North Dodge Street, P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, Iowa 52243
(319) 337-1000

ACT

HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS
EXPERIENCES SURVEY

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Directions: We are interested in learning the views of college students regarding the value of selected language arts experiences in high school that may have contributed to your ability to express yourself in written and in oral communication. You should be able to answer the questions below in about 10-15 minutes. We will combine your responses with those of several hundred other college students. Only group statistics will be developed. No one will examine your individual questionnaire. Thank you for your help. Please return the completed survey in the enclosed envelope within five days.

Name of current college/university (if attending)_____

Current educational major/premajor_____

I. Please indicate (in the space provided) the number of semesters you took the following subjects for credit in high school.

1. ___ English I (Freshman English in 9th grade freshman in high school)
2. ___ English II (Sophomore English)
3. ___ English III (Junior English)
4. ___ English IV (Senior English)
5. ___ English Composition
6. ___ Honors English
7. ___ Creative Writing
8. ___ Journalism
9. ___ Newspaper (for credit)
10. ___ Yearbook (for credit)
11. ___ Speech
12. ___ Drama
13. Other English (specify courses)_____
    _____
    _____

II. Indicate (in the space provided) the number of semesters you have taken the following subjects in college, or activities in which you have participated.

Subjects:

1. ___ English Composition/Rhetoric
2. ___ Literature
3. ___ Journalism
4. ___ Speech
5. ___ Grammar

Activities:

1. ___ Newspaper
2. ___ Yearbook
3. ___ Radio/Television
4. ___ Public Relations (e.g., Office of Public Information, Sports Information)

III. Listed below are a number of competencies that you may have developed. To what extent did the high school coursework and related activities listed in three blocks at the right contribute to the development of the competencies? For each competency, indicate whether the courses/experiences "helped a great deal," "helped a little," or "did not help." Omit a response in a block if you did not have formal courses in the courses. Check the most appropriate response for each group of experiences.

	Standard English Courses (English I, II, III, etc.)			Journalism Courses (including Yearbook and Newspaper for credit)			Other Elective Courses (Speech, Drama, Creative Writing, etc.)		
	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help
Example: Ability to write topic sentences		✓		✓					
1. Ability to develop topic ideas for writing.									
2. Ability to organize a piece of writing for a specific purpose and audience.									
3. Ability to organize, select, and relate ideas, outline them, and develop them into coherent paragraphs.									
4. Ability to write Standard English sentences in correct sentence structure using appropriate verb forms, punctuation, capitalization, possessives, plurals, word choice, and correct spelling.									
5. Ability to vary writing style for different readers and purposes.									
6. Ability to improve writing through self-editing--correcting errors, and rewriting sentences and paragraphs.									
7. Ability to gather information from primary and secondary sources, to write a report using this research, to quote, paraphrase and summarize accurately, and to cite sources properly.									

Note: (✓) Indicates that Standard English courses "helped a little" but journalism courses "helped a lot" to develop competency. Other electives were not taken, so no response was given.

	Standard English Courses (English I, II, III, etc.)			Journalism Courses (including Yearbook and Newspaper for credit)			Other Elective Courses (Speech, Drama, Creative Writing, etc.)		
	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help
8. Development of a writing style applicable to either fiction or non-fiction.									
9. Ability to write non-fiction concisely, with clarity, accuracy, and objectivity.									
10. Ability to edit, for a specific audience, the writing of others.									
11. Ability to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in a written work and to summarize them.									
12. Ability to separate personal opinions and assumptions from those of a writer.									
13. Ability to engage critically and constructively in the exchange of ideas, particularly during class discussions and conferences with instructors.									
14. Ability to answer and ask questions coherently and concisely, and to follow spoken instructions.									
15. Ability to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in lectures and discussions and to report accurately what others have said.									
16. Ability to use appropriate spoken language with diverse individuals and groups.									
17. Ability to identify and formulate problems and to propose and evaluate ways to solve them.									
18. Ability to recognize and use inductive and deductive reasoning, and to recognize errors in reasoning.									
19. Ability to write persuasively about issues related to school and non-school issues.									

	Standard English Courses (English I, II, III, etc.)			Journalism Courses (including Yearbook and Newspaper for credit)			Other Elective Courses (Speech, Drama, Creative Writing, etc.)		
	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help	Helped a Lot	Helped a Little	Did Not Help
20. Ability to draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources, whether written, spoken, or displayed in tables and graphs.									
21. Ability to comprehend, develop, and use concepts and generalization.									
22. Ability to accept constructive criticism and learn from it.									
23. Ability to understand and synthesize main ideas from reading, lectures, and other academic experiences; and to apply information to new situations.									
24. Ability to develop specialized vocabularies, and to use them for reading, writing, speaking, listening, computing, and studying.									
25. Ability to communicate with peers and older people on a professional level.									
26. Ability to deal with conflicts while working with other people on a project.									
27. Development of a sense of responsibility, leadership, and personal maturity.									
28. Development of self-confidence, personal worth, and self-esteem.									
29. Development of a sense of accomplishment and involvement in the school and community.									

IV. If you have suggestions for teachers of the high school language arts courses that would benefit future college students, please list your ideas in the space below.